



Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

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# PRESS RELEASE

## U.S. AND SICA SIGN AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENTS TO FOSTER ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SECURITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA

**SAN SALVADOR**— The U.S. government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided \$23.25 million for ongoing programs in support of economic development and improved peace and security in Central America.

The amendment to the agreements were signed by the U.S. Ambassador, Charles L. Glazer and the Secretary-General of the Central American Integration System, Ambassador Aníbal Quiñónez, in a ceremony held this afternoon in San Salvador, which was also presided over by El Salvador Minister of Foreign Relations Marisol Argueta de Barrilas and USAID El Salvador Director Deborah Kennedy-Iraheta.

These funds are part of an ongoing \$72 million regional program, which includes \$69 million for economic development and \$3 million for an ongoing anti-gang program.

The first agreement is enabling member countries of the U.S.-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) to support the adoption of laws, policies and regulations that promote trade and investment in addition to improved management of critical watersheds and natural resources. USAID is helping countries to facilitate trade by developing more consistent customs provisions, rules of origin procedures, and sanitation standards requirements. Assistance is also provided to enforce environmental laws and strengthen the capacity of labor justice institutions.

The second agreement supports activities across the region that will provide greater opportunities for youth, who are at risk of being recruited into the gangs, and rehabilitation of those who wish to escape the violent cycle found within the gangs. USAID will work closely with regional, national and municipal governments, as well as with church and civil organizations, to identify opportunities and needs to help ensure that youth at risk do not get involved in gangs.

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